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Valero to shutter Aruba refinery

Valero Energy Corp. said Monday that it will shutter its refinery in Aruba at month's end because of "unfavorable refinery economics" that are expected to continue.

The San Antonio-based refiner said in a statement that the 235,000-barrel-per-day plant has been operating at reduced rates because of unfavorable margins that have led to losses.

Valero said it's considering turning the plant site into a terminal and storage operation.

For more than two years, Valero has said it was considering "strategic alternatives" for the plant that could include its sale or closure.

In July 2009, Valero closed the refinery, saying it was losing millions each month, but it restarted the plant in late 2010 when economic conditions improved.

Valero CEO Bill Klesse said last week that the refinery -- which uses fuel oil to fire boilers, make steam and power other operations -- was at a disadvantage to refineries in the United States that have

access to the cheap, plentiful supplies of natural gas for operations. The difference can add up to \$2 a barrel to operating costs, he added.

The company will maintain the plant in a state which would allow it to restart should the refining environment improve, after announcing in November that it was looking at options for the Aruba plant including finding a strategic partner.

Valero said that discussions with interested parties, including those facilitated by the government, will continue.

"We appreciate the diligent and incredible efforts of Prime Minister Eman and his government in helping Valero find an economic alternative that would allow continued operation of the refinery," said Klesse in the press statement.

"Our discussions with interested parties, including those facilitated by the Government of Aruba, will continue."

Office Systems signs landmark agreement with Dauphin design group



Carlos and wife Lila with Friedrich W. Dauphin and wife Elke showing off the contract

Thursday evening, March 15, Carlos Maduro, winner of the inaugural Aruba Star Innovation Award welcomed some very special guests, Mr. Friedrich-W Dauphin, Managing Partner of Dauphin HumanDesign® Group and his wife, Elke, to the Office System's factory and showroom on the outskirts of Oranjestad.

Carlos, son of Joe and Myra, owners of Office Systems, had the support of his parents in his revolutionary idea around 10 years ago to begin manufacturing on-island the quality European office furniture they had so successfully sold for 20 years, in order to keep up with a market that was being thinned by not only competitors, but cheaper grades of product.

He believed by importing the raw materials and producing the furniture to the same standards, it could be done at more competitive prices, and despite what every bank and

business consulted told them, "it can't be done," they went ahead, and proved them wrong.

"Aruba is jewel in the Caribbean," Carlos told the gathering of island business people and employees, "But strategically we have a location which comes with its challenges. Freight to our island is very expensive. These influences which we all have to deal with drive up the prices of furniture to a degree

that it becomes almost impossible to buy a decent piece locally. And this is just one of the aspects that play a role in office furniture."

He explained that Aruba is not only competing on a local level, but globally, as buying online becomes a norm, and island entrepreneurs must begin thinking differently about how they do business, and what sort of business they will start.

Continued on pg 4

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Island pride and love of homeland demonstrated on March 18



P.M. Eman gives the traditional address

Aruba may be a small island, but when it comes time to celebrate, particularly the National Day, March 18, they spare no effort in demonstrating their love of country. A full year of events marking Aruba's silver anniversary of autonomy within the Dutch Kingdom came to a close on Sunday March 18, with a final flourish.

This year, the traditional address by the Prime Minister and a parade took place in both Oranjestad and San Nicolas, so as to include all islanders in the final observance of this landmark year of Status Aparte, Aruba being independent of the other islands of the Netherlands An-

tilles, which officially began on January 1, 1986.

Island dignitaries gathered early on Sunday morning before the Bestuurskantoor, the Government House in Oranjestad where the offices of the various Ministers are located, to receive the annual "State of the Union" address from Prime Minister Mike Eman.

He likened the elders statesmen who initiated the Status Aparte movement over 60 years ago to a seaman, steering Aruba on a course; today's leaders are obligated to continue to steer the island true in the direction of pros-



Arrival of Governor Fredis Refunjol

perity, a united community and sustainability.

The morning ceremony was also marked by the un-



veiling of two commemorative books "Twenty-five

Years in Your Service," and "A Biography: 40 years to Today," which were ceremoniously gifted to Aruba's Governor Fredis Refunjol, Prime Minister Mike Eman, President of Parliament Paul Croes and Minister of Social & Economic Affairs and Culture, Michelle Hooyboer-Winklaar.

March 18, 1948 was the day that the Prime Minister's father, Albert (Shon) Eman presented the petition for an independent Aruba at round table discussion in Holland with their ministers and representatives of all the Dutch Caribbean territories;

in itself an historic first.

It was on March 18, 1976 that Aruba's national anthem and flag were first introduced. One of the committee members involved in the selection of the anthem, Maybelline Arends-Croes, directed the Tuti-Fruti Choral Group, consisting of children from four of Aruba's primary schools, in performing it on Sunday, accompanied by the National Youth Orchestra under the direction of Johnny Croes.

The morning finished with a parade of 47 organizations before the Prime Minister, local and visiting dignitaries, led by the fife and drum corps of the Aruba Militia.

Continue on pg 3



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Island pride and love of homeland demonstrated on March 18

Continued from pg 2



The largest group was Scouting Aruba, with over 225 participants, beginning with the youngest. The process was repeated in the evening in San Nicolas, with Minister of Finance, Communications, Utilities and Energy, Mike de Meza, addressing the people of his "home town" and performances by Sunrise Dancers and Rincon Boyz.

By Rosalie Klein

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Office Systems signs landmark agreement with Dauphin design group

continued from pg 1



Brother Jaime, Carlos, Dauphins, Myra and Joe Maduro and famous chair

The island certainly is over saturated with restaurants, souvenir, clothing and accessory shops, and Carlos' goal was to do something "out of the box."

"We were willing to look into a different direction,

tution will front you the capital to start a vision with no economical feasibility. Think about it. Are you willing to risk a solid business model of simply selling office furniture in order to jump into the abyss of manufacturing?"

Dauphin on Thursday evening and proudly displayed the agreement for Office Systems to not only manufacture office furniture for Aruba, but to be the plant and distributor for the stylish and respected Zuco line, which caters to a high end market, for all the Dutch Caribbean islands. The impact in the realization of an Aruban company manufacturing and exporting goods was acknowledged by MC for the evening, Dr. Ryan Peterson, President of the National Council for Innovation and Competitiveness, NCIC as truly a landmark moment for Aruba's economy. It is hoped other potential entrepreneurs will have the flexibility of mind and determination to research and pursue the possibilities.

Deploying some savvy marketing practices, their chairs became associated with the slogan "Sit on this." Carlos, after relating the challenges and mistakes made from which they learned and moved on, summed up their success. "We were warned, but did it anyway. Armed with nothing but sheer determination and passion we



Ryan Peterson, Joyce Bartels Daal and Greg Peterson

mainly manufacturing," he explained. However, "experts" told him, "Manufacturing on such a small island as Aruba is ridiculous. Your market is not big enough and there exists no example of such an undertaking. How do you propose to start if you have no experience in manufacturing? No respected insti-

"What is the problem?" he asked his critics, and being told there were too many uncertainties made him even more determined. "But that was not the problem. It was in the way it was being asked," he stated, and he responded "What is **your** problem?"

The risk paid off, as he shook hands with Mr.



Dauphins, Carlos and Aruba's Minister of Social & Economic Affairs and Culture, Michelle Hooyboer-Winklaar with gift

started in a type of small garage style lab / experiment room. A couple of guys looking to complicate things instead of just holding on to the status quo our respected financial institutions hold so dear." His advice to others wishing to follow his example is don't listen to "People who can't do something and want to tell you that you can't do it either"

"When world events take place they do not ask for our permission. We weren't certain where we were going, we just needed to go. And we did. Granted, it may have been one the hardest journeys our company has gone through, but the result-we have here sitting with us one the world's most respected office furniture manufactur-

ers in the world, our friend and now official partner. Mr. Dauphin, is not saying "it can't be done," he's saying "let's work together," concluded Carlos.

Aruba's Minister of Social & Economic Affairs and Culture, Michelle Hooyboer-Winklaar, also expressed her belief in the importance of this contract to the island economy and what it may portend. In appreciation for Mr. Dauphin's vision and confidence in Carlos and his staff at Office Systems, he presented him and Mrs. Dauphin with a beautiful print on canvas of Aruba's recently named official symbol, the indigenous owl, called "Shoco" in Papiamentu.

By Rosalie Klein



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Nine bids to host future technology centre

PARIS (AFP) - Plans for a global centre to help transfer clean technology to poorer countries have drawn nine bids, including from Iran's oil industry and a team led by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the UN climate forum said on Monday.

Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) backed the proposal at a meeting in Durban, South Africa last December.

Bidders to host the centre include a 13-member consortium led by the Kenya-based UNEP and whose ranks include energy research institutes in India, the United States and Netherlands, the UNFCCC said in a press release.

Others are the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), a Washington-based international funder of environmental programmes; Costa Rica's Institute of Technology; and Indonesia's National Council on Climate Change.

There is also a bid by the Research Institute of Petroleum Industry (RIPI) in Tehran, which carries out research for Iran's oil and gas sector.

Fossil fuels are the biggest contributor to global warming, which scientists say is inflicting worrying changes to the climate system.

The nine applicants will be whittled down to a short-list of five next month.

In May, a UNFCCC expert panel will propose the winner. Final approval rests with the UNFCCC's annual ministerial-level meeting, taking place in Qatar from November 26-December 7.

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Psychiatric support from Curacao for Aruban addiction cases

The government of Aruba, Capriles Clinic in Curacao and the Aruba Foundation for the Management of Addiction, represented by, respectively, Minister Richard Visser, Waldi Oostburg and Mrs. Ottespeer, met together last week. In this meeting they signed a cooperative agreement having to do with the psychiatric care of addicted individuals.

Apparently, the Aruban community has been wanting this type of cooperation for a



long time, as in many cases this type of assistance is often the very support that a family

needs to help an addicted loved one.

The good news is that

Capriles Clinic in Curacao and F.M.M.A. will henceforth be cooperating with each other and will begin exploring the possibility for sending Aruban clients to Curacao to be admitted at the Capriles Clinic.

The government is pleased with this cooperation as this will be much less cumbersome than sending clients to more distant places. Also, for the families this will be very convenient as Curacao is much closer to home.

Before getting to the final stage of finally signing an agreement, there were several encounters between the director of the Hospital, Dr. Falconi, psychiatrists at PAAZ and Capriles Clinic along with F.M.M.A.

The Psychiatric department here, according to the government, requires a great deal of research and investigation. They also believe that we must provide the highest level of professional and well structured care.

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TUESDAY AND FRIDAY: LIVE MUSIC

International News

Romney looks to big win in Obama's home state



CHICAGO (AFP) - White House hopeful Mitt Romney is looking for a big win in President Barack Obama's home state of Illinois to knock his Republican rivals out of the race and focus his energies on the November vote.

A resounding win in Illinois today -- after capturing 88 percent of the vote Sunday in Puerto Rico -- would provide powerful momentum for Romney ahead of Louisiana's primary Saturday.

The former Massachusetts governor also has a commanding lead in the all-important delegate count with 1,144 needed to win the party's nomination.

But as he slogs through a grueling state-by-state primary race, he has been weakened by his failure to convince the conservative base that he should be the Republican contender to take on Obama on November 6.

Written off in the early days, Santorum, a former Pennsylvania senator, has steadily notched up wins -- 10 out of the past 31 contests -- largely with the help of evangelicals and the party's most conservative members.

The Romney campaign is hoping however that upcoming contests in Wisconsin, Maryland and Washington DC

on April 3, as well as a slew of votes in Connecticut, Delaware, New York, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island later in April will firm up his position.

Santorum's campaign has been urging former House speaker Newt Gingrich -- who has only won two contests -- to drop out of the race in order to consolidate the conservative vote.

Santorum insists that a "true conservative" is needed to rally the party's base and dismisses fears his positions are too extreme and could turn off moderate Republicans and key independent voters.

The four Republican contenders are trying to reach the 1,144 delegates to lock up the nomination, with the winner to be crowned at the party convention in Tampa in August.

About halfway through the race, Romney has pocketed 516

delegates, while Santorum is on 236 and Gingrich 141, according to the website Real Clear Politics. Libertarian congressman Ron Paul has about 66.

Illinois and Louisiana between them have more than 110 delegates up for grabs, while by the end of April another 320 or so will have been decided -- many of them in states where the winner takes all.

Should Romney do well in the more liberal east coast states as expected, he could well be in an unstoppable position mathematically by the end of next month.

Meanwhile, in national polls Obama held a six-point lead over Santorum while he was in a statistical tie over Romney, according to Rasmussen polling center.

The Obama campaign meanwhile said Monday he had raised more than \$45 million in February to fund his bid for a second White House term.



CAIRO, Egypt - Egyptian Coptic priests gather around the body of Pope Shenuda III, the spiritual leader of the Middle East's largest Christian minority, sitting dressed in formal robes on a wooden throne at the Saint Mark's Coptic Cathedral in Cairo's al-Abbassiya district on March 19, 2012. Pope Shenuda died at the age of 88, after a long battle with illness and based on his wishes he will be buried on March 20, at St. Bishoy monastery in Wadi Natrun in the Nile Delta where he spent his time in exile after a dispute with late president Anwar Sadat. **AFP PHOTO**

Ex NASA expert attacks bosses in religious row

LOS ANGELES (AFP) - A former expert at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) claimed Monday he was falsely accused of harassing co-workers about religion, as he took the stand at an unfair dismissal trial.

Computer administrator David Coppedge, who describes himself as an evangelical Christian, was fired last year after expressing support for intelligent design to fellow employees.

His trial started last week, and on Monday testified that his supervisor Gregory Chin had wrongly accused him, threatened his freedom of religion and created a potentially hostile working environment.

"You are pushing your religion in this office and harassing people with this religion," Chin said, according to Coppedge, who added: "He was angry and he got angrier."

Coppedge said he asked Chin why he considered intelligent design anything but science. "Dave, intelligent design is religion," Chin replied, according to Coppedge.

Chin warned him against discussing religion or politics with colleagues, he said.

"I felt threatened .. I said: 'Greg, this gets into issues of free speech and freedom of religion ... this could be construed as creating a hostile work environment'," he added.

Coppedge filed a religious discrimination lawsuit in April 2010, and claims he was dismissed nine months later in retaliation for taking the legal action -- but JPL said he was laid off as part of a staff reduction.

Coppedge, who had joined JPL in 1996, was an information technology specialist and system administrator -- and team leader -- on the project's

Cassini mission to Saturn.

He lost his team leader role in 2009, and left the company last year after 15 years.

In a sworn declaration last week, he denied he was aggressive in voicing views about religion, including by sending emails criticizing the change in name of the 2003 Cassini Christmas party to a "holiday party."

"I was not pushy, scolding or demanding in these emails," he said. "In fact, my purpose was to convince them to not be so politically correct. It wouldn't have made any sense for me to have been pushy," he said.

In a statement issued as the trial opened, JPL dismissed the charges, saying: "The suit is completely without merit and we intend to vigorously fight the allegations raised by Mr Coppedge."

JPL is a division of the California Institute of Technology, which operates under a contract with NASA.

REMEMBER

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French election campaign on hold after school shooting

PARIS (AFP) - France effectively put its election campaign on hold Monday after a gunman killed three children and a teacher at a Jewish school and candidates set politics aside to condemn the shocking attack.

President Nicolas Sarkozy and the Socialist frontrunner in the presidential race, Francois Hollande, cancelled campaign events and rushed to the southern city of Toulouse, amid fears the attack could be the work of a serial killer.

Speaking at the scene of the killings, Sarkozy announced a minute of silence in all French schools today and said the state would throw its full weight behind the investigation.

Speaking later after a meeting of top security officials in Paris, Sarkozy said he was putting the southwestern Midi-Pyrenees region on its highest terror alert level and suspending his campaign until at least Wednesday.

Hollande, also at the scene, called for the country to unite after the shooting, urging: "We must do everything to ensure that acts of anti-Semitism or racism are met with a firm and common response from the whole Republic."

In an earlier statement Hollande said he was going to Toulouse to show "solidarity with the families and France's Jewish community".

Both Sarkozy and Hollande, as well as other top officials, later attended a ceremony at the Nazareth synagogue in central Paris to commemorate the victims.

A Jewish students' group was to hold a silent march in Paris after the ceremony.

The campaign had been building up before the shooting, with Sarkozy for the first time last week moving ahead of Hollande in voter intentions in the first round of voting, to be held on April 22.

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Pentagon weighs charges for Afghan murder suspect

WASHINGTON (AFP) - US Army Staff Sergeant Robert Bales is likely to be formally charged in the shooting deaths of 16 Afghan villagers within days, a US Army official told AFP Monday.

He faces the possibility of the death penalty if he is convicted, according to Defense Secretary Leon Panetta.

Under the US military jus-

tice system, prosecutors draft charges to be filed against an accused soldier, then present them to his unit commander.

The commander must decide whether the documents show there is enough evidence to believe the accused soldier committed a crime. If so, the commander signs the charging documents so the case can be "preferred" for formal prose-

cution.

Before trial, Bales must appear at an "Article 32" hearing, which is as a preliminary hearing at which prosecutors argue for a court-martial.

Bales, 38, is accused of leaving his base in the Panjwayi district of Kandahar province on the night of March 11 to kill 16 Afghan villagers, including nine children. He al-

legedly set several of their bodies on fire.

Afterward, prosecutors say Bales returned to his base and turned himself in to authorities.

Bales is represented by both a civilian attorney and a military attorney.

His civilian attorney, John Henry Browne, said at a press

conference that Bales had been under stress recently, which was heightened when he witnessed a fellow soldier seriously wounded by stepping on a mine. He did not explain the legal defense he would use for his client.

The US media reported Bales and his wife were enduring financial problems.

Health & Living

More victims possible in alleged nurse murder case

MONTEVIDEO (AFP) - Prosecutors in Uruguay Monday tried to determine if there were more victims killed by two male nurses who confessed to killing at least 16 patients in misguided bids to end suffering.

Police on Sunday arrested the two health care workers, 39 and 46, and charged them with the homicides of patients at a private Neurological Intensive Care Center and a public hospital's intermediate-level care unit.

A girlfriend of one of the men, who also is a nurse, was arrested and charged with covering up information in the case.

Uruguayan officials declined to say precisely how many suspicious deaths are currently under review, but have said that one of the male suspects has admitted to 11 killings and the other to five.

Authorities said they were looking for additional victims, as the daily El Pais newspaper

reported that the death toll could exceed 50.

Ines Mazziotti, a defense attorney for one of the men, said the acts were not homicide, but instead were "mercy" killings intended to put desperately ill patients out of their misery.

"After 20 years in intensive care, or constant stress on the edge of life and death, he could not take it anymore," she said.

But Angel Rosas, a police commissioner involved in the investigation rejected any suggestion that the killings were carried out as mercy killings.

"In our view, these are criminal acts," said Rosas. A lot of people have had doubts about the death of their relatives in these health centers. They're getting uneasy, and contacting the police," he said.

The case first became known to authorities back in January through a tip from "private sources." Authorities stepped up their investigation

after the suspicious death of a female patient last week.

Judge Rolando Vomero, who is in charge of the investigation, told reporters Sunday that the accused used different methods to end patients' lives.

"In one of the cases," he explained, "the suspect introduced morphine directly into the blood stream while in the other, they pumped air into the blood stream, which resulted in deaths in just a few minutes."

The suspects said they had been driven by a desire "not to see human suffering," said Vomero, who said they also acknowledged that their patients had not been afflicted by terminal diseases.

Uruguay's Health Ministry also has voiced "deep concern" and said it is working cooperating with the probe and has convened the Patient Safety Commission "to help collect information and assist in the criminal and judicial probes."

Six arrested in fake medicine bust: Europol



THE HAGUE (AFP) - Six people have been arrested in a police sting in Spain and Britain, suspected of importing and selling large quantities of fake medication from Asia including Viagra, Europol said Monday.

"The members of the criminal gang were importing fake pharmaceuticals from Asia -- mainly China and Singapore --

- and distributing them via the Internet to 'customers' throughout Europe," the police agency said in a statement.

Police seized some 300,000 doses of fake medicine after an operation by Spanish police in the southeastern city of Murcia as well as in Britain and the Mediterranean island of Cyprus, Europol said.

Anti-potency pills like Viagra and Cialis as well as generic drugs were distributed by the group, it added, saying the drugs were made in clandestine laboratories.

One Spanish, two Romanians and a Dutch citizen were arrested in Spain, while the two Britons were arrested in their home country on Wednesday and Thursday, said Europol.

"They were the most important individuals in the network, but other arrests could follow," Europol spokesman Soren Pedersen told AFP.

"Unlicensed, untested and potentially laced with dangerous filler ingredients, fake medicine can put users' health and even life at risk," Europol added.

The World Health Organisation said half the medication sold on the Internet was fake.

In September last year, police and customs officers from 81 countries in an operation seized a record 2.4 million doses of counterfeit medicines to be sold on the Internet.

They arrested 55 people in 10 countries mainly in Europe, Japan, Colombia and Uruguay.



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Dutch lawmakers call for Church castration claims debate

THE HAGUE (AFP) - Dutch lawmakers have called for a parliamentary debate after a media report that local Catholics castrated children in the 1950s to "cure" homosexuality, a party spokeswoman said Monday.

The call followed an NRC Handelsblad newspaper investigation published Saturday which said at least a dozen children were castrated in order to "cure them of their sexual orientation".

It focused on the case of a man named Henk Hethuis, who it said was castrated by priests in 1956 after testifying in a police investigation about child abuse in a Catholic boarding school in the eastern Gelderland province.

After he testified Hethuis was taken to a Catholic psychiatric institution and was "castrated because of his homosexual behaviour," the paper said.

A commission set up to probe sex-abuse claims from 1945 to the present day last year found that tens of thousands of children were sexually abused within the Roman Catholic Church in the Netherlands.

But Hethuis' case, reported by 79-year-old Cornelius Rogge, was never investigated

as the Deetman Commission "found too few connection points for a further investigation" into castration claims.

"More abuse seems to have taken place which has not been put into the report of the (Deetman) commission," Laura Huisman, spokeswoman for Premier Mark Rutte's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) told AFP.

"We want a session and debate as soon as possible to find out why this investigation was not done," she said.

"If the facts are correct, we are speaking of a serious situation that is being condemned by the (Catholic) Church," added Dutch Bishops' Conference spokesman Bert Elbertse. He pledged the Church would work closely with the investigation should it take place.

The Deetman Commission report, released in mid-December said tens of thousands of children were abused and identified 800 perpetrators of sexual crimes within the Catholic Church between 1945 and 2010.

The Church has been rocked for several years now by a series of scandals involving paedophilia including in Austria, Belgium, Ireland, Germany and the United States.

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Sci-Tech

Chevron accused of graft in Indonesian green project

JAKARTA (AFP) - Indonesia on week-end accused five Chevron employees of being involved in a scam to set up a fictitious green project that lost the state some \$270 million, a charge denied by the US oil giant.

"The Attorney-General's Office (AGO) has named seven suspects, five of whom are from Chevron," the office said in a statement on its web-site.

"Provisional estimates show losses of around \$270 million," it said, adding the project appeared to be fictitious. But Chevron denied the

allegations, saying that the land restoration project was "up and running."

The attorney-general did not disclose the nationalities of the Chevron suspects.

The other two suspects were from government agency, the Indonesian Upstream Oil and Gas Agency, and had been questioned, said the AGO.

The case centres on a project on Sumatra island, in which Chevron's Indonesian subsidiary was to clean up soil contaminated by its drilling activities.

Under a government programme, Chevron would be re-

imbursed for the work by the oil and gas agency.

According to Chevron, it paid two companies to carry out the project, but investigators said they believed the land restoration was never carried out.

The two companies -- Green Planet Indonesia and Sumigita Jaya -- did not meet technical classifications or hold the right certificates to engage in land restoration, according to the AGO statement.

Chevron Pacific Indonesia denied the allegations.

The company says it is the largest producer of crude oil in Indonesia, recording an average daily production of 477,000 barrels in 2010.

Chevron is facing enormous fines for environmental destruction in Latin America, where it is challenging a landmark court order in Ecuador and could face fines from the Brazilian state of Rio de Janeiro for a November oil spill.

new products to be sold at chain outlets such as Best Buy in addition to Apple stores.

Five protesters showed up with a banner and petition calling on Apple to improve the conditions for workers in China who make its products.

The first person to purchase an iPad in New York was Eric Ladd, 38. Ladd flew to New York from Brazil and waited in line for 30 hours but said it was worth it.

"People in Brazil are going to wait three or four months for it," he said.

Among the iPad buyers camping overnight outside a Los Angeles store was Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak, who has made it a tradition to join crowds waiting to purchase the latest innovation from Apple.

The latest version has a more powerful processor and a screen resolution called retina display which Apple says is the sharpest ever on a mobile device.

Apple fans snap up new iPad in muted launch

(AFP) - The new iPad went on sale on Friday with Apple fans lining up from Sydney to San Francisco to snap up the latest model of the hot-selling tablet computer.

Buyers in Asia, Europe and the United States praised the eye-poppingly sharp display on the new iPad but a device which is otherwise short on new technology failed to bring out the crowds seen at previous Apple product launches.

A queue of about 300 people wrapped around a corner of the Apple store in downtown San Francisco while close to 1,000 people lined up outside Apple's futuristic flagship location in Manhattan.

Apple's online shop in the United States quickly sold out of iPads for delivery on Friday and began telling buyers they will have to wait several weeks for one.

The queue in San Francisco lacked the numbers and festive atmosphere of past Apple launches in part because the company has begun to allow

Climate: Nine bids to host future technology centre

PARIS (AFP) - Plans for a global centre to help transfer clean technology to poorer countries have drawn nine bids, including from Iran's oil industry and a team led by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the UN climate forum said on Monday.

Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) backed the proposal at a meeting in Durban, South Africa last December.

Bidders to host the centre include a 13-member consortium led by the Kenya-based UNEP and whose ranks include energy research institutes in India, the United States and Netherlands, the UNFCCC said in a press release.

Others are the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), a Washington-based international funder of environmental programmes; Costa Rica's Institute of Technology; and Indonesia's National Council on Climate Change.

There is also a bid by the Research Institute of Petroleum Industry (RIPI) in Tehran, which carries out research for Iran's oil and gas sector.

Fossil fuels are the biggest contributor to global warming, which scientists say is inflicting worrying changes to the climate system.

The nine applicants will be whittled down to a shortlist of five next month.

In May, a UNFCCC expert panel will propose the winner. Final approval rests with the UNFCCC's annual ministerial-level meeting, taking place in Qatar from November 26-December 7.



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"Together we will learn"



JERUSALEM : Dr. Roni Grosz the Curator of Albert Einstein Archives present the Albert Einstein private library following a press conference at the Israeli Hebrew University in Jerusalem on March 19, 2012. The Israeli Hebrew University is launching a project to digitalise all archived Albert Einstein documents and his private library to make it available to the general public.

AFP PHOTO

COMICS

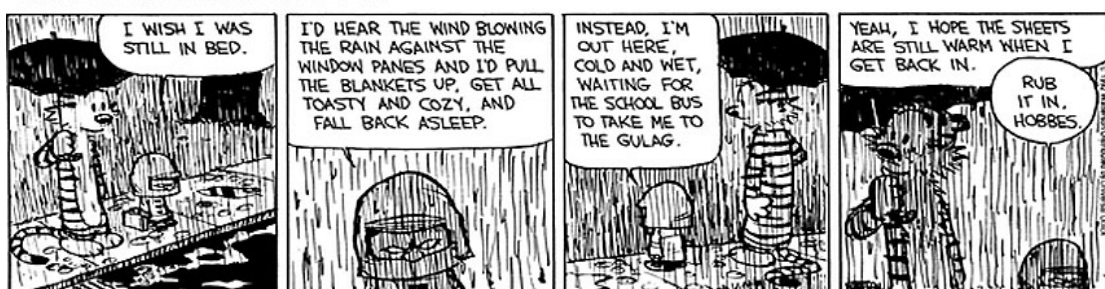
PICKLES



MOMMA



CALVIN and HOBBS



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ACROSS

1. Arithmetic answers
5. Sounds of uncertainty
8. Roman dress
12. "___ something I said?" (2 wds.)
13. Freckle
14. Onassis and Meyers
15. Wide-angle view
17. What some call Grandma
18. Tie the knot again
20. Whetstones
23. London's river
27. Historical

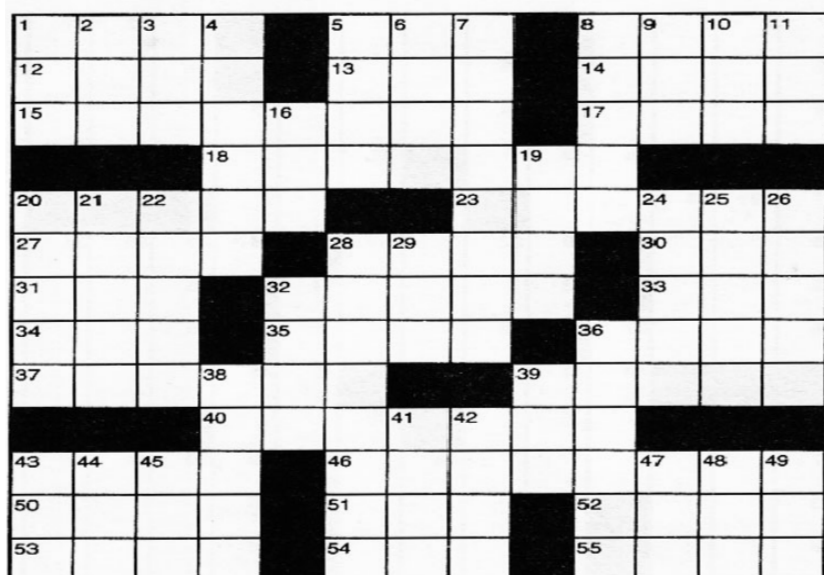
28. General Robert ___ (2 wds.)
30. One Mrs. Sinatra
31. In the past
32. Additional
33. Trucker's semi
34. On the ___ (fleeing)
35. Marries
36. Dentist's concern
37. Carping person
39. Excuses
40. Fugitive
43. Epps of "House"

46. Impressionist
50. Surrealism's Salvador
51. Legislator (abbr.)
52. Turnpike feature
53. Transaction
54. Liverpool's locale (abbr.)
55. Lays pre-grown grass

DOWN

1. Small drink
2. Shout at the Olympics
3. 60 seconds (abbr.)
4. Supermarkets

5. Cheese from Holland
6. Actress Downey
7. Beginners
8. Actress Roberts
9. "...man ___ mouse?" (2 wds.)
10. Bombay Sapphire product
11. Big ___ whale (2 wds.)
16. Home (abbr.)
19. Caroline of "Sabrina"
20. Makes well
21. Church instrument
22. Supermodel Campbell
24. Scientist Curie
25. Juan Peron's wife
26. Philosophers
28. Do aerobics
29. Ford midsize car
32. Sheep females
36. Cries, like a sheep
38. Jeopardy
39. Goldfish, e.g.
41. Prayer word
42. Sharp sound
43. Peculiar
44. Hollywood's West
45. ___ mode (2 wds.)
47. Moreover
48. Venerable
49. "Treasure Island" inits.



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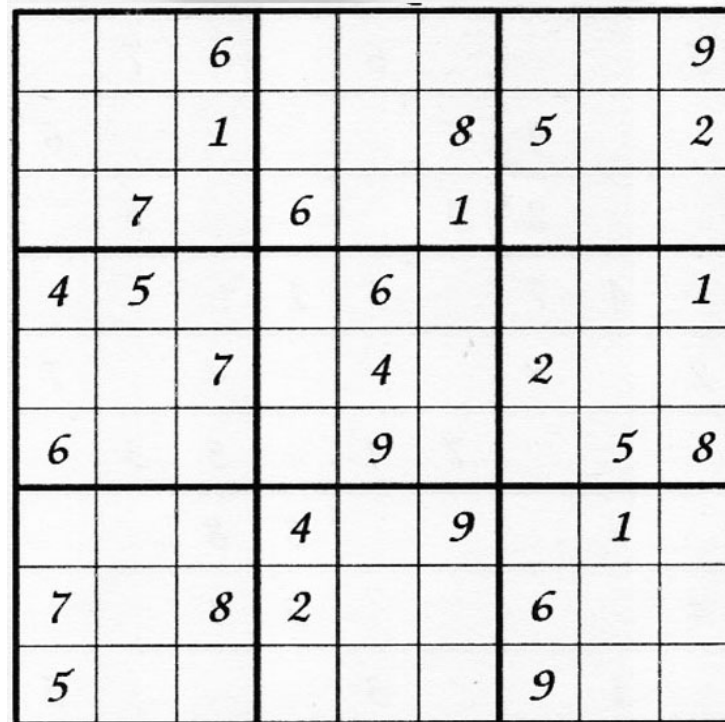
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Sudoku



SOLUTION

5	2	6	9	8	4	7	1	3
5	7	9	1	2	8	6	4	3
4	1	8	6	5	7	9	2	3
8	5	7	4	6	1	2	9	3
9	6	2	5	7	9	4	8	1
1	9	4	2	9	8	6	5	7
7	8	1	2	9	5	4	6	3
2	9	5	8	4	6	1	7	3
6	4	1	7	9	5	2	8	3

Complete the grid so that every row and every column contains the numbers 1 through 9
A number is Never repeated in a row or column.
In addition every rectangle must contain the numbers 1 through 9

Finance

Cash-rich Apple to pay dividend, buy back shares

SAN FRANCISCO (AFP) - Apple announced Monday it will spend part of its massive cash hoard to pay its first dividend since 1995 to shareholders and buy back \$10 billion in shares.

But the company stressed the plan, which will tap into a cash stockpile of \$98 billion, will not restrict its ability to invest in research, develop new products, or pursue valuable acquisitions.

Apple said it would pay a quarterly dividend of \$2.65 per share from its cash balance generated from sales of its hugely successful gadgets like the iPad and iPhone.

The dividend payment would start with the company's 2012 fiscal fourth quarter, which begins on July 1.

The \$10 billion share buy-back will begin in fiscal 2013, which begins on September 30.

Apple said it expected the repurchase program to be carried out over three years in an effort to neutralize the impact of dilution from future employee equity grants and employee stock purchase programs.

Chief financial officer Peter Oppenheimer described the company as generating enough cash quarterly to easily accommodate the dividend -- amounting to \$10 billion a year -- and the stock buyback without deeply impacting Apple's resources.

In the company's 2011 fiscal year, Apple generated \$31 billion in surplus cash. In the first quarter of 2012, it added another \$24 billion.

In total, including its employee stock options, Apple will spend \$45 billion over the next three years on these programs, Oppenheimer said.

Apple shares jumped 2.2 percent to \$598.82 in early trade. The shares have run up nearly 47 percent since the beginning of the year.

Cook painted a strong pic-

ture for the company, especially in sales of its iPhone smart phones and iPad tablet computers -- the newest model of which was launched last Friday, with fans lining up from Sydney to San Francisco to snap them up.

Analysts were pleased that Apple finally decided to loosen its purse strings and pay dividends but were unimpressed with the amount, which was described as below average for successful technology companies.

Apple is hauling in cash at such a breathtaking pace that its coffers are expected to continue swelling despite paying dividends and buying back stock.

Looking past the mountain of cash, some in Silicon Valley saw the dividend as the first major move distinguishing Cook's style from that of his predecessor, legendary Apple co-founder Steve Jobs who died of cancer last year.

Jobs, who rescued Apple from the brink of bankruptcy, was tight-fisted when it came to Apple holding onto money.

In the company's first quarter of this fiscal year -- ended December 31 -- they sold 37 million iPhones, less than 9 percent of all handsets sold during the quarter.

The handset market will continue to grow, to about two billion units in 2015, and increasingly will favor smartphones, Cook said.

China to join in \$1 bn LatAm investment fund

MONTEVIDEO (AFP) - China will join the Inter-American Development Bank to create a \$1 billion fund for Latin American investments, IDB president Luis Alberto Moreno announced Monday.

Moreno, speaking after the 53rd annual meeting of the organization, said the program would be "a fund which we will create with the Chinese government" for the region.

An IDB statement said the goal is to promote "equity investments to promote sustainable economic development in the region."

The investment fund is expected to be operational this year following a letter of intent signed between the IDB and China Eximbank in 2011.

"This new platform will promote stronger investment ties between China and Latin America and the Caribbean, helping our region overcome some of the most important development challenges," said Moreno.

The IDB and China Exim-

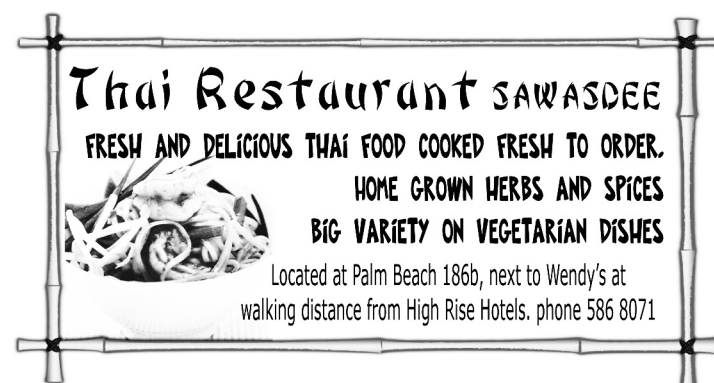
bank will each put \$150 million into the fund and will select "internationally recognized asset management firms to manage the investments and raise funds from the markets," a statement said.

China is already a major economic partner with many Latin American economies, particularly Brazil. The IDB is the main multilateral lender to the region, having provided \$11 billion last year.

The new effort shows "the enormous interest China has for the Latin American region," Moreno said.

Sources familiar with the project said the effort would seek to invest in companies in the region, differing from IDB credits, which go mainly for development and infrastructure.

Separately, Moreno said the organization hopes to come up with plans in April for a so-called contingency fund to help countries in the region hit by global economic turmoil.



Oil prices mixed on conflicting US, Iran signals

NEW YORK (AFP) - Oil prices closed mixed Monday as traders weighed positive economic signs in the United States, the world's biggest oil consumer, and supply worries spurred by Iran tensions.

New York's main futures contract, West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude for delivery in April, closed at \$108.09 a barrel, a gain of \$1.03 from Friday's closing level.

In London, Brent North Sea crude for May delivery slipped 10 cents from Friday to settle at \$125.71 a barrel.

Meanwhile, the dollar's decline against the euro helped to support dollar-priced oil and other commodities, Melek noted.

A weaker dollar makes them less expensive for buyers using stronger currencies, pushing up demand.

Tensions between the West and Iran over Tehran's suspected nuclear weapons drive continued to underpin oil prices.

Iran insists its nuclear program is strictly for peaceful purposes, but its threat to close the Strait of Hormuz, a key oil transit, has markets on edge.

On Sunday, oil-dependent Iraq moved to diversify its oil export routes to reduce the impact of a potential closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

The plans, recommended by the cabinet's energy and economics committees, include efforts to ramp up exports along a pipeline to Turkey, increase the amount of oil transported by road, and "urgently" fix disused transport pipelines, the government said in a statement.

Deutsche Boerse challenges EU on merger veto

BERLIN (AFP) - German stock market operator Deutsche Boerse said on Monday it would challenge a European Union veto against a merger with NYSE Euronext that would have created the world's largest exchange operator.

"Deutsche Boerse will file charges at the European Union court in Luxembourg," the company said in a statement, referring to the European Court of Justice, while adding that "several aspects of the decision" by the European Commission were "incorrect".

Last month the companies cancelled their mega-merger after European regulators vetoed their plan to create the world's largest exchange operator over concerns it would potentially dominate the global derivatives trade.

In the February decision, the European Commission said it had "no alternative" but to veto the transatlantic tie-up, billed as a merger but which would have left the German side dominant in the combined company.

The commission had expressed worries that the venture would have had monopolistic power in certain derivatives trading, but NYSE Euronext and Deutsche Boerse refused recommendations to divest some of the business that the merger would have covered.

At the time of the veto, Deutsche Boerse said the decision by Brussels showed the EU was "out of touch with reality" and NYSE Euronext said the veto was "based on a fundamentally different understanding of the derivatives market".

In pursuing the deal, the two had to fend off a competing \$11.3 billion bid by the Nasdaq and ICE exchanges for NYSE Euronext, which they had said valued NYSE Euronext at nearly 20 percent more than the German suitor's valuation.

But that higher valued bid was ultimately scotched when US regulators signaled they would oppose it on anti-trust grounds.

YESTERDAY'S Crossword Answer

A	C	E	S	A	L	M	S	A	G	T
P	I	N	T	S	E	E	M	M	A	R
R	O	S	E	P	E	N	A	L	I	Z
	V	P	S		S	L	I	D	E	
O	T	H	E	R	A	W	L	S		
W	H	O		E	L	S	E		P	L
N	O	W		P	E	C	A	N		I
S	U	L		S	O	R	E		M	A
	F	A	S	T		A	B	E	T	S
P	R	O	B	E		I	R	E		
P	E	A	S	A	N	T	S		A	J
A	R	G		T	E	R	I		R	A
R	M	S		E	D	I	T		D	I

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Comemorative books on Aruba's 'Status Aparte' presented to our dignitaries



Minister Michelle Hooyboer-Winklaar, Parliament President Drs. Paul Croes, Aruba Governor Fredis Refunjol, and Prime Minister Mike Eman with copies of the books.

During Sunday's Aruba National Day ceremonies held in front of the City Hall Building, two books were given to our local dignitaries. The book, titled, "Aruba 25 Status Aaparte, Bibliography of the Status Aaprte of Aruba," which was edited by Irais Sankatsing-Nava was the first of the two books to be presented.

This book was prepared on the initiative of the Commis-

sion to Celebrate the 25th Anniversary of Status Aparte, and mandated by the Ministry of Economic, Cultural and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Justice and Education. The book kept track of all other material previously written and documented about Status Aparte over the past 40 years to the present.

The other book presented on Aruba National Day, was "25 Years at Your Service,"

edited by Alice Van Romondt in cooperation with 41 government departments. This book recounts the history of government services as of the start of Aruba's apart status within the Dutch Kingdom in 1986. Alice Van Romondt was the first Cabinet Chef for the first Prime Minister of the new Aruba, and later the first Secretary of the Council of Ministers. This publication recounts how the various new



Former Prime Minister of the Netherlands Antilles, Mrs. Emily de Jong-Elhage receiving her copy of "25 Years at Your Service" from Mrs. Alice Van Romondt.

departments were organized and how other institutions were formed to become part of the new Aruba.

The two books were offered to Aruba Governor, Fredis Refunjol; Parliament

President, Drs. Paul Croes; Prime Minister Mike Eman, and Minister Michelle Hooyboer-Winklaar. The books were also presented to former Prime Minister of the Netherlands Antilles, Mrs. Emily de Jong-Elhage.

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Adorable and affordable; 5 Burgers Aruba offers an island twist to the great American Burger

Expatriates residing on Aruba, Aaron and Rosie Walisever are living their dream: a home on paradise while welcoming all and sundry to their proud undertaking, 5 Burgers Aruba. Some may be quite well acquainted with a nationally known U.S franchise bearing the name "5", and patrons can expect the same great quality between the buns, but an expanded menu and Rosie and Aaron's fanatical dedication to giving their customers what they really want has resulted in a unique menu.

"You never get a second chance to make a



Rosie and Aaron love their Burger too



Gouda Burger 2

first impression," comments Aaron; and upon entering 5 Burgers Aruba in The Village Mall in Palm Beach, one is struck by utterly spotless surroundings and a smiling, friendly, attentive service crew. Of course, the main item on the menu is burgers-the way they were meant to be, thick and juicy, made fresh daily and 100% pure beef, the kind that made the hamburger a traditional American treat.

Prices vary only slightly between regular and small (basically 2 patties or 1) with specialty items such as Gouda Burger, Farmer's Burger, Man Burger (almost 12 ounces of choice beef), and a Western Burger with crispy onion rings and BBQ sauce. All of these can be personalized with an incredible array of toppings, (mushrooms, jalapeño peppers, bacon, cheese, lettuce, tomato... whatever the list goes on) at absolutely no extra cost.

5 Burger portions are ENORMOUS! Aaron suggests that even their small serving of fries, which are made from hand-cut fresh Idaho potatoes, is enough to

be shared by two. He was very amused to watch a famous French chef demonstrating the best way to make fried potatoes on a gourmet cooking show and could only comment "He stole my recipe!" Try them the English way-with vinegar, and you'll wonder how you ever ate fries without it. This same 5-star chef also swears by Gouda as the best topping for the ideal gourmet cheeseburger.

If you are a fan of crispy friend onion rings, as we are at THE MORNING NEWS, you cannot leave there without trying their secret recipe batter-dipped gourmet rings, made from fresh, not frozen onions. Unquestionably, the best we have had anywhere, and for those that like a little spice, the fried jalapeños are a real treat. Aaron and Rosie have expanded their menu to accommodate certain tastes and dietary needs; they offer a tasty grilled chicken sandwich as well.

5 Burgers Aruba is open for lunch & dinner - daily hours are Noon to 10-ish; delivery is available to both the high-rise and low-rise hotel and beach district for orders over \$50. Enjoy a great lunch without ever leaving the beach by calling 586-3904. However, we suggest you stop by and enjoy their authentic, heartfelt hospitality; it is not unusual for the owners when things are not too busy, to sit and chat while sharing their knowledge of the island. Totally yummy and fun plus a great deal for a quality burger, they are definitely worth a visit

SPORTS

Djokovic, Azarenka look to defend Miami titles



Novak Djokovic of Serbia returns a shot to John Isner of USA.

(AFP) - Top-ranked Novak Djokovic of Serbia and Victoria Azarenka of Belarus will try to defend their titles at the \$9.6 million ATP and WTA Miami hardcourt event that begins today.

The showdown stretches for nearly a fortnight and comes after Djokovic was upset in the Indian Wells semi-finals and Azarenka beat World No. 2 Maria Sharapova in Sunday's final, as she did in last year's Miami final.

Djokovic was upset by big-serving American John Isner, who lost to World No. 3 Roger Federer in the Indian Wells final.

Now thanks to the first-round byes for Miami's high seeds, Djokovic is off until Saturday when he faces either Argentina's Leonardo Mayer or Cypriot Marcos Baghdatis.

Djokovic defeated World No. 2 Rafael Nadal in last year's final, adding that title to his 2007 Miami crown.

The five-time Grand Slam champion comes into the event off a Grand Slam title at the Australian Open, just as he did last year.

Djokovic, who has captured the past three Grand Slam titles, could join Pete Sampras and Andre Agassi as the only three-time men's champions at Miami and become the first man since Federer in 2005 and 2006 to win back-to-back titles.

Nadal, a 10-time Grand Slam champion, has never won the Miami crown despite three trips to the finals, settling for runner-up honors in 2005 and 2008 as well as last year.

Nadal will open against either fellow Spaniard Pablo Andujar or Colombia's Santiago Giraldo.

Federer, who has won a record 16 Grand Slam

crowns, has not won the Miami crown since 2006 but is on a roll, having won three tournaments in a row with titles at Rotterdam and Dubai as well as Indian Wells.

World No. 4 Andy Murray of Britain, who crashed out in the second round at Indian Wells, will try to bounce back at Miami, where he defeated Djokovic in the 2009 final.

Murray will open against either Uzbekistan's Denis Istomin or Colombia's Alejandro Falla while Federer's first foe will be either US wild-

card Ryan Harrison or Italy's Potito Starace.

Isner, ranked 10th, will open against either US countryman James Blake or Russia's Nikolay Davydenko.

On the women's side, Azarenka's first match will be against either a qualifier or Dutchwoman Michaella Krajicek while Sharapova, on the opposite end of the draw, starts in round two against a qualifier or Israel's Shahar Peer.

Czech third seed Petra Kvitová had the worst luck of the draw, with a bye into round two against either Japan's Kimiko Date-Krumm or US wildcard Venus Williams, a three-time Miami champion with seven Grand Slam singles titles.

Williams, like her sister Serena, is coming back after a long injury absence.

Chinese eighth seed Li Na, the reigning French Open champion, opens against a qualifier or Italy's Alberta Brianti. She could face compatriot Peng Shuai in the round-of-16 and Sharapova in the quarter-finals.

continues on page 15

Stricken Muamba breathing on his own - hospital



Bolton Wanderers midfielder Fabrice Muamba.

LONDON (AFP) - Bolton Wanderers player Fabrice Muamba was on Monday said by doctors to be breathing on his own again, although he remained in an intensive care unit after his on-field cardiac arrest.

A statement issued by the hospital where the 23-year-old is being treated said: "Fabrice Muamba remains in intensive care at The London Chest Hospital.

Muamba slumped onto the turf towards the end of the first half of an FA Cup quarter-final at Tottenham's White Hart Lane stadium in London on

Saturday.

Millions of TV viewers saw medical staff attempting to resuscitate him on the pitch as players, who were visibly shaken, looked on before Muamba was stretchered off the field.

His manager at Premier League club Bolton, Owen Coyle, spoke of the midfielder's "brave fight" after visiting Muamba in hospital on Monday.

Coyle said the player's family appreciated the many messages of support they had received.

The plight of the player born in what is now the Democratic Republic of Congo has sparked a wave of support from his fellow players and football fans worldwide.

Following Muamba's on-field collapse, referee Howard Webb took the players off the field and, with the agreement of both clubs, abandoned a tie where the score had stood at 1-1.

In the wake of the incident, Bolton have postponed their next match, a Premier League game away to Aston Villa due to take place on today..



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Messi world's highest-paid footballer - magazine



Argentina's Lionel Messi, pictured on March 17, 2012

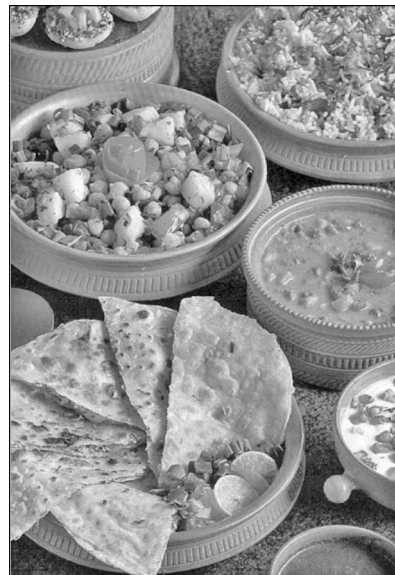
(AFP) - Argentina's Lionel Messi is the world's highest-paid footballer, followed by David Beckham of England and Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo, according to France Football magazine.

Barcelona talisman Messi earns some 33 million euros (\$43.5 million) a year with a 10.5-million-euro salary, 1.5 million euros in bonuses and 21 million euros in advertising and other contracts.

Former Manchester United midfielder Beckham, now at LA Galaxy, takes home 31.5 million euros, largely due to his 26 million euros' worth of advertising and endorsement contracts.

Real Madrid's Ronaldo earns 29.2 million euros, from a 13-million-euro annual salary and 15.5 million euros from off-the-pitch revenue, France Football said in an article to be published on Tuesday.

Ronaldo's coach at the Camp Nou, Portugal's Jose Mourinho, topped the list of highest-earning managers with 14.8 million euros a year, followed by Paris Saint-Germain's Carlo Ancelotti (13.5 million euros)



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Mets baseball team settles in Madoff lawsuit

NEW YORK (AFP) - The hotly awaited trial to determine whether the owners of the New York Mets baseball team should give up \$303 million earned from Wall Street fraudster Bernard Madoff ended Monday before it had begun.

Under a last-minute settlement, the defendants agreed to pay back \$162 million over the next five years, while the official trustee pursuing them will abandon his lawsuit, Judge Jed Rakoff announced in Manhattan federal court.

The lawsuit alleged that the Mets owners must have known Madoff was a cheat when he paid huge returns from what was in fact a multibillion dollar Ponzi scheme and that they deliberately turned a blind eye. Under the settlement the trustee "will no longer pursue the willful blindness claim against the defendants," Rakoff said.

The deal was unveiled in a packed courtroom all ready to go to trial.

Mets co-owners Fred Wilpon and Saul Katz, whose financial situation at the trou-

bled Major League Baseball club is as rocky as the players' performance, were visibly relieved.

The settlement also mandates that the two sides, locked in bitter dispute until now, bury the hatchet, saying "all parties agree not to make any disparaging statements" about each other.

The deal saved the Mets owners millions of dollars and may also have saved the Madoff trustee, Irving H. Picard, from costly failure.

Picard, who is about halfway toward his stated goal of recovering some \$20 billion in funds from former investors with Madoff, originally wanted to squeeze \$1 billion from the Mets. The money Picard gathers will be paid out to investors deemed to have been victims of Madoff's scam.

But before the settlement deal, Rakoff had limited Picard to an initial sum of \$83.3 million, which the Wilpon family must pay back, and gave him the opportunity to persuade a jury in the civil trial that another \$303 million had to be

returned.

A pillar of Wall Street investors, Madoff handled huge sums of money for a Who's Who of the wealthy and powerful, ranging from international banks to Hollywood stars, and a host of institutions and individuals from his Jewish American community.

Bringing clients steady returns whatever the wider economic situation, Madoff earned the reputation of financial miracle worker. However, instead of making real profits, he was simply taking money from new investors to divide up and pay to existing clients, a scheme that worked until the stock market crash of 2008 prompted a cascade of redemption requests.

While court proceedings had been expected to revolve around the dry details of financial dealings by the Mets before Madoff's 2008 arrest and implosion of his pyramid scheme, the scheduled trial stoked widespread public interest in a city obsessed with baseball and finance.

Golf: Els still hurting after painful PGA loss

MIAMI (AFP) - Ernie Els was still hurting a day after his bogey-bogey finish at the

PGA Transitions Championship cost him a victory and a spot in next month's Masters, he said in a Monday blog on the US PGA website.

The South African star, a three-time major champion who has never won the Masters, led by a stroke on the 17th tee but took a bogey and then missed a short putt on the 18th green to miss out on what became a four-man playoff.

"I always play to win, so any time I get the opportunity to do that and don't get the job done, obviously I'm disappointed and angry with myself," Els said. "I was so hot I found it difficult to even think straight."

"I've had a night to sleep on it, though. It still hurts the way I finished the tournament, but I know in my heart how well I played all week."

"I have to believe that if I keep doing what I'm doing, the results will reflect that and I'll give myself plenty more opportunities to win."

The 42-year-old nicknamed "Big Easy" for his relaxed manner admitted that he tensed up on the 18th green and botched the pivotal putt with so much riding on

the stroke.

"That putt on 18, well, it kind of leaves a nasty taste," Els said. "It's a difficult green, but I should have made it. I was trying to jam it in there and I just pulled it, simple as that."

Britain's Luke Donald birdied the first playoff hole, the 18th, to win the playoff and reclaim the World No. 1 ranking from Northern Ireland's Rory McIlroy.

Els was ranked 62nd on Monday and must either win one of the next two PGA events -- this week at Bay Hill and next week in Houston -- or reach the top 50 in the rankings to book a Masters berth at Augusta National, where he twice has finished second.

"If I'm going to secure my place in the Masters I may have to win, or at least come very close, in one of my next two tournaments," Els said.

"The nice thing is I'll go into both of those tournaments knowing my game is pretty much right where I need it to be in order to compete and get in the mix again," Els said.

"And next time I like to think I can finish the job off."

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Djokovic, Azarenka look to

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Australian sixth seed Samantha Stosur, the reigning US Open champion, opens against Czech Clara Zakopalova or a qualifier and she could face a fourth-round matchup with US 10th seed Serena Williams, a 13-time Grand Slam champion.

Williams, a five-time Miami women's champion who has been out with an ankle sprain, will open against either China's Zhang Shuai or Britain's Elena Baltacha.

Belgium's Kim Clijsters is among those who will play in the first round. If the 2005 and 2010 Miami winner defeats Australian Jamila Gajdosova, she will face Germany's 14th-seeded Julia Goerges in round two.

Clijsters is a possible round-of-16 opponent for fourth seed Caroline Wozniacki. The Dane will open against either a qualifier or Czech Barbora Zahlavova Strycova.

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Manning asks agent to seal deal with Broncos: report



Peyton Manning, pictured on March 7

(AFP) - Peyton Manning has asked his agent to complete a deal with the Denver Broncos, ESPN reported Monday, sending the four-time National Football League Most Valuable Player to a new team if talks succeed.

The report, citing unnamed sources, says former Indianapolis quarterback Manning spoke with Broncos vice-president John Elway, a retired Super Bowl champion

quarterback for Denver, about a five-year deal worth \$95 million.

"It's crazy. It feels so surreal," Broncos defensive end Elvis Dumervil said. "It is such a historic move for our organization. It's going to be a great time."

Tom Condon, Manning's agent, must still finalize the deal, but the report said details were a formality and contract terms could be con-

cluded in the next day or two.

Manning called Elway to tell him of his choice and also called the San Francisco 49ers and Tennessee Titans, his other finalist choices among the clubs that wooed him, to inform them of his decision, according to the report.

The Broncos will not play either the Indianapolis Colts, the team Manning led to a Super Bowl title, or the reigning Super Bowl champion New York Giants, where Manning's younger brother Eli is the quarterback, in the 2012 season.

Manning, who will turn 36 on Saturday, was released by the Colts on March 7 after the team decided not to pay him a \$28 million bonus to pick up the final four years on his contract.

"Peyton Manning!!!!" said former Denver running back Terrell Davis on Twitter.

Manning, who missed the entire 2011 regular season after a fourth neck surgery, has been medically cleared to play by doctors.

But the Colts did not want

to risk health issues by Manning when they owned the first pick in next month's NFL Draft and were set to select college quarterback Andrew Luck.

Manning went to visit the Broncos two days after he was dropped by the Colts and he conducted a workout for Elway last Friday in North Carolina.

Contract language to protect the Broncos in case Manning's neck injury becomes an issue and guaranteed money compared to incentive payments for meeting production goals are among the key details remaining to be settled.

Manning has passed physicals for several teams but told them that he still feels he can improve arm strength and endurance related to nerve regeneration in his neck.

The Broncos will add the third-best quarterback in NFL history behind Brett Favre and Dan Marino with 4,682 completions for 54,828 yards and 399 touchdowns and a Super Bowl title in

2007.

Denver reached the playoffs last season behind quarterback phenomenon Tim Tebow, who likely will be traded, according to the report.

While the Broncos have retired the No. 18 jersey Manning wore with the Colts, the 84-year-old first quarterback of the Broncos who wore the number in the 1960s, Frank Tripucka, has said he would be fine if Manning took the number out of retirement.

Manning will be among several Super Bowl champion quarterback legends who made their fame with one team only to finish their career with another.

That list includes Joe Montana, with San Francisco and later Kansas City; Brett Favre with Green Bay and later Minnesota and the New York Jets; Johnny Unitas, with the Baltimore Colts and later San Diego, and Joe Namath, first with the New York Jets and later with the Los Angeles Rams.